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Contents

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EDITORIAL

May I present proudly — "Galmahra," 1941.

It is fashionable, in this University at least, to decry all manifestations of student thought, all attempts at cultural expression; it is fashionable to say that one never bothers to look inside a "Galmahra"; it is the thing to express loudly one's disbelief that there is anything worth reading in the University magazine.

But what is fashionable in this case is also barren, stupid and contemptible.

Contrary to what you, my little-brained scoffer, consider it smart to opine, there are people in this University who have something to say and can say it in worthwhile fashion.

And in this issue there is work which will be remembered for a long while among intelligent people; while the remainder is perfectly readable.

Once when the illustrious Mozart was writing an opera, his father Leopold, whose advice to his son was usually sound, wrote to the genius pointing out that in Vienna there were many citizens to whom good music meant little, and urging that it might be profitable to provide for variation in tastes by including in the opera a little music "for long ears." To this recommendation Mozart replied that he was well aware of the existence of divergences of taste; that in his opera there would be music for all tastes; but that "for long ears" there would be not one note.

So it is, I think, with this issue of "Galmahra." While there is something within these pages for a wide range of inclinations there is nothing for long ears, in the literary sense.

In fact long-eared people might just as well give up now.

Most disappointing aspect is the lack of attention by University writers to the screaming contemporary scene. They show amazing indifference to environment. The most ferocious conflict in history clangs about us; socialist Russia, ranged with the democracies, is in death-grapple with the fascist powers; heroic Leningrad ignores its terrible wounds and stands steadfast beneath the flame that is its flag; like incipient earthquake revolt trembles underground throughout bound-and-gagged Europe. All this colossal turmoil, with almost the certitude of our own direct involvement, and yet we write like pansies! Do we deserve a solid kick for our stupid apathy, or is it that the closeness to us of this vast action has a numbing influence? Is is that its nearness prevents our apprehension of it, just as print cannot be read too close to the eyes? Will it have to be looked back upon before it can be written about? Is it that it is so much easier to fight now than to write now? At all events we cannot tell if we won't try.

Epilogue to Murder

The afternoon was a green and gold bowl in which the air lay like thin colourless jelly. Around the house shadows of pines and gums were more real than the trees themselves, and when the intense scar of a flower bed ran through the shadow the sharp colours were blurred and dissolved and unconvincing. From where she looked, at the closed uncurtained window, qualities had withdrawn a little from their objects; there was a gap that made her doubtful of both.

And behind her, synchronising with vibrations of the shaking sun, insisted the "cling-clong" of a grandfather. She thought of the first sound as a long sharp icicle which was spewed out of the clock's bowels and hung air-borne for a moment before dissolving; the second was an icicle too, but plump and spherical and lasting longer. When the hot air melted them they flowed back to be frozen and clanged out again. Turning, moving with the careful long deliberation of habit and abstraction, she mounted the stairs. The sunlight slabbed her on the back as she went.

In the bedroom it cascaded through the long corner windows, unfamiliarising accustomed things by the flood of strange light: she noted the dust in the cracks between the polished floorboards, shining like threads of silver, and the spectrum a bevel in the window made of the light coruscated across the bed. The light slewed and jerked like a bad motion picture. She moved across the room and stared at her image in the mirror, inspecting it with the bemused unselfconscious scrutiny of a drunk who shuttles into a telephone post. She thought she looked rather like Lady Macbeth, and thrust her hand into the red part of the spectrum experimentally, withdrawing it with distaste when the light made it blotched and mottled.

Gravely, seriously, she wondered if she were real—if one could stay still in time, moving backwards and forwards in the

confines of one event like an engine puffing purposelessly up and down a siding. Yes, but something went on: there was a slow divergence of two awarenesses. The gap again.

Why? She throbbed at the vacant one-eyed bed. The decision—had there been a decision, or had she wedged that in later, out of its proper place in time? A "no" crystallised; no, she'd had time to decide . . . she'd known for five minutes. First the 'phone call, her cold, her husky voice, the mistake—anger rose in her again, hurting her temples, constricting her throat.

She felt for the associations, gently, as one explores an aching tooth with tongue-tip. It had been like being bitten by a snake, having to amputate a finger, quickly, desperately, before you could think about it. She noted impersonally the common element in the analogies, the cutting, the knife. It had gone in with ease that astonished her every time she remembered it, and the surprise attracted again the explanation into her consciousness. It had gone between two ribs.

Her anger had still been searing enough to make her twist it—perhaps she'd wanted to make a wider channel for the blood, so it would well out, not spurt like that. He glugged at first—the sort of noise one makes in mild reproof—then he'd seemed to realise, and had tried to sit up. His hands had swept in two mechanical arcs and fastened on her wrist, and his eyes had bulged out and suddenly run over with little bloodshot veins, like her father when he used to get a fish-bone in his throat. Then he'd coughed.

Couldn't she get past there—catch up? Only if there'd be something concrete, universal: a symbol. Did she have to decide, decide—when decision and consequence were past? What was that "past"?

It began somewhere down in her breast, and she could feel herself trembling as if she were standing beside a miraculously silent stone-crusher. It was long before she realised what sense was bringing her the sensation—and then it had rumbled into a variegated texture of industrious sound, rising and falling with a rhythm grown full of significance, murmuring through her like rain after long drought, like——, like——.

She thought of hundreds of "likes" while the curtains puffed in full-belliedly, and the trees crickled in approval, and the flower beds leaned to the stir like a schooner bowling round the Horn.

Somewhere high up in a ceiling corner, mudding mud to mud, freighting side-slippingly in through the window, booming in circles for the spiral ascent and dropping down again in half-throttle glides the wasps were building.

Life was going on. She caught up.

PETER MILES.

Wind

Grass like small feet following,
Wind-worried. Wind in Moreton Figs
Through leaves hand-broad, thick, stiff, through boughs
Soft-clumsy, loutish, knotted, wind roar-loud
In undertones, congealed in trees, and suddenly
Shrill-free again. In pines it sings
A high clear note, in palms it creaks,
Rubs, rustles all the night: one tells what tree
By wind sound. In the Moreton Figs
Along the river, roar, roar, loud and deep
And dully warped, unlovely, menacing. And grass
Like small feet following.

PETER MILES.

Liverpool—the Georges River

The water was green and cool, and the ferryman gladly gave us one of his little tin boats. I paid his fee and lay back in the bows while John, ever energetic, took up the paddle, and with long, easy strokes, shot upstream.

The trees hung protectingly over the water, trying to shield it from the sunshine—unavailingly, of course, for the long shafts of sunlight went down, down through the water, right to where the tiny grey pond-things flitted about in the feathery weeds on the sand below. By lying over the bows of the canoe I could see all this—could see also the odd variety of the stream bed—here stony, here sandy, then suddenly rising to meet me, the green-black changing to white, so that I waited for the sliding crunch that would make me get out to walk over the shallows.

I took the paddle and we slipped on. His turn now to listen to the vibrant ripple of our progress (that sound sweetest of all to the oarsman—more beautiful than any race-sound, or the crunch of prawns under your feet on a city pontoon—the sound of a good craft moving over waters in the manner designed by the River-Goddess herself). It was my turn to feel the power I could unleash—to vary my stroke from a gentle patting to a strong bell-like, bubbly heave, or to a rapid, almost divine, sway of the shoulders; mine to feel the glow of exercise and the slight tiredness in my upper arms; the thrill of muscles stretching and contracting.

On, on, past the foot-bridge and its three sentinel cypresses. Here shallows, there deeps, past wee islets and stretching sand-banks, shooting the road-bridge.

Our swimming-place. We sweep into a deep pool and slide to rest beside a rock platform—a natural landing. We can step out here and wade down into the coolness of the waters—for the sturdy grit of this sandstone is nude of weed or fungus. Upon the rock are inlets where the water is gently warm. For a minute we gaze at the bottle-brush with its quaint yellow

blooms, and smell the warm heady smell of the eucalypts, which nurse this pool in their midst and shoulder each other away in their passionate love of it. Just for a minute we look our worship. Then we struggle quickly with our shirts and shorts and stretch our sunny limbs in the cool depths.

Deep for diving; broad for striving or lying just awash—like some misplaced submarine.

And so back down the river. Past a bird's nest hanging a bare foot above the water—the youngsters open-mouthed, shrilling their indignant demand for food.

Slipping downstream, saturated with sun, experiencing a curious stillness of life—a calm tidelessness and lack of current equal only to that of the stream we floated on (as if, momentarily, our lives, too, were weired up into a still reach of beauty).

And so we broke into the home-reach, past the bridge-site and the reeds further along, who seemed as we slid by to whisper to us the sweet native name of those shady banks—Casula!

HAL GEHRMANN.

EPIGRAM

Posted her a lyric,
Nicely panegyric;
Said my heart was gladdened
(Wish to hell I hadn't)
By the paths she scented.
Now she thinks I meant it.
Poets! to hysteric
Maids give odes satiric.

G.C.L.H.

This Living is Too Large

This living is too large an undertaking:
Would need a superman, a demigod
Straight from a schooling in intensity,
Incapable of wonder, knowing all
And seeing things beneath him—not above,
And whirling round his head, and clamouring
Experience; for I am overwhelmed.
I am afraid to live, to trust my youth
And my young-growing thought and infant wisdom.
I am bewildered; deafened by the claims
Of jostling loyalties; blinded by the light
Of sudden love and slow attainment of
Pure brilliant truth.
One life is all I need,
And I have many—lives to throw away.

MOTLEY.

Chalk Marks

The day dawned. The dawn was like the dawn of any other day. But not for Paul Glotz. It was his last dawn. The white chalk marks on his cell wall told him that. Thirty of them. He counted them again in the dim light, touching each one meticulously with his finger and calling the tally aloud.

Thirty of them. Not one less. Yet the day had broken and they had not come for him. He was to have been shot the instant that day broke and he had not been shot. There must be something wrong.

Was he being reprieved? Hardly, he thought. He had no friends outside to help him; besides, he would have been told by the prison Commandant.

He climbed on to his rude bunk and looked out through the barred window. There was a sign of activity in the prison yard. Men marched to and fro. They were not in the uniform of the prison warders but of the regular army and they carried rifles. They were young men, as young as he was, and their faces looked serious in the early morning light.

Paul thought: "The waiting must be as difficult for them as it is for me. I know what is going to happen; they have only an idea. They all hope they may draw a blank cartridge."

Two guards came out of a low doorway on the other side of the courtyard. They had a man between them. At least, he looked as tall as a man, but when he drew near Paul could see he was only a boy. "Not more than seventeen," said Paul to himself.

The guards handed the boy over to an officer. He was stood against the wall, so that the first rays of the morning sun, striking down over the outer walls, touched one side of his face, leaving the other in shadow. It seemed as though that part of his face in the shadow had been shorn away. Paul felt a shiver run down his spine, but watched fascinated.

The boy impatiently pushed aside the bandage they held out to him. Apparently he wanted to face the firing squad. But

they turned his face to the wall and as he raised his arms to press his hands against the stones, Paul could see that his fists were clenched, hard and white, and that they twitched.

As the rifles crashed, Paul fell from the window, writhing in his own bunk. He tried to imagine the body of the boy as the bullets had torn through the thin clothes and the flesh; the body lying fallen, with the blood on the stones beneath it. He was mad to think about it, he told himself, but what could he think about? A long time he sat silent and thoughtful; then a warder's footsteps sounded in the corridor outside. Paul leaped to his feet and backed into the farthest corner of his cell. He listened intently; he could tell that there was only one man coming by the sound of the footsteps. He relaxed and went back to his bunk and sat down.

The sound of the footsteps passed and grew less distinct as they retreated in the distance. Paul stood up on his bunk and looked out of the window. There had been no more sound of firing, and the soldiers were gone. Something lay under a piece of canvas near the wall which was now bathed in sunlight. So that was what awaited him.

How foolish he was, Paul thought. Perhaps he wasn't so foolish after all. Love of his country and hatred of National Socialism could not be considered foolish. He didn't want to see Slovakia under the Iron Heel. "You're right there," he told himself soberly. "The Reich is making quite sure that you don't . . . "

The footsteps were returning. He could hear them clearly and there were two of them now. He ran to the door and leaned against it listening. He could hear the steps and the beating of his own heart. How it pounded! The sounds, all except his heart, stopped suddenly. Then it seemed as though his heart had stopped too.

He heard a key turn and heard the metallic clang of a door being thrown suddenly open. He tried to calculate and it seemed to him that it was the fifth cell along the corridor. That would be Stephen. He and Stephen were at the University together. Stephen was a law student, and thought it no offence to speak critically of National Socialism. Paul himself was studying medicine and they were the best of friends. That was why they were the leaders of the students' riot which had caused

their arrest. Three more of their friends were condemned to die with them, but Stephen and he were to be the first.

Paul decided that he wouldn't see Stephen die. He went back to his bunk and sat there, perfectly still, with his hands clamped over his ears so that he shouldn't hear the volley. For two minutes he remained there, then he gently lifted his hands; there was a sound of activity outside, but he couldn't tell whether the volley had been fired. He placed his fingers hard into his ears again, but the suspense was too great, so he removed his fingers and stood up and looked out of the window. There were no soldiers in the courtyard, only some men who had come to remove the body of the boy.

He sat down in sheer relief, but he couldn't understand it. According to the chalk marks on the wall of his cell, he was to die to-day at dawn.

Somewhere in the courtyard the footsteps echoed again. They came nearer to his cell and stopped outside. The key scraped in the lock and the door opened. Paul looked up to see that one of the warders had brought him a bowl of food.

"Your breakfast, prisoner," was all he said.

He put the bowl down.

"But I thought—" Paul began.

"You thought what?"

"I thought that I was—that—"

"What made you think that?"

"I kept count of the days over there on the wall." He showed them the chalk marks.

One of the warders laughed. "Oh, those—I added a few myself when you were out of the way."

Paul fainted.

"Poor ———!" said the warder, kicking Paul in the ribs to revive him. "I wonder now how many I did add. It must have been half a dozen, from time to time. Still, he'll find out."

The door closed behind them.

E. DUNCAN.

Trailer

It was the end of Creation and the Lord had come to judge His creatures. He was not a very good Lord and not a very bad one. Often He had proclaimed it as His eternal and immutable law that the mean or middle course led to the easiest virtue and the most enjoyable vice. This He had sent to Man in a Code, and the Key of it to Woman; but in all their intercourse never once had they solved it.

On the religious leaders the heaviest blow was to fall. "I had to bring My creation to an end," said the Lord, "and recall My thoughts to Myself because these blundering wowsers could not divine rightly. I watched their feeble attempts to construct a system of religion from animism, pantheism, monotheism to theism and to convey my desires aright to their casual, sporting brethren. What wowsers they were! I only wanted them to decipher My code, and they talked about sin, evil, sex, hell—rubbish. All men were good for there was no evil to do."

The vast arena was cleared. Around at a distance stood the shaking throng. An official hastened forward. "I gently waked the dead, O Lord."

"Did they leave their B.O. behind them?"

"Certainly, Lord."

"The Court's now sitting," boomed the Lord. "Bring in the first offenders."

The priests and parsons shuffle forward; some are high church dignitaries, others are not. "I did not know we had scarlet men," mused the Lord. "Still Justice shall not be perverted. My judgment is quick and sure. To hell with you; you made it, now go and live in it."

A woman sidled forward. "But, Lord, this one says he is celibate."

"To woman with him," boomed the Lord.

The lawyers next strut forward. They are perky and assured. "Hang 'em all," roared the Chief Judge.

"We appeal, we appeal!" they chorused back.

"Hang 'em again."

The scientists must next come to judgment. "Ah, ah; just as I was looking for some more pets to amuse Me. Einstein, here, you can get into that cage; there, next the parrots. Make the fools more dimensional and madder if you can. I don't want to hear any more of your theories."

The philosophers were not awed—they already knew. "You were the under-labourers in My vineyard and you were quite successful. Here you may carry on your good work and produce better wine."

The professors of wisdom cautiously move forward. "Do you know all things?" asked the Lord.

"Yes truly, Lord. We have read so many exam. papers that now we know all things. We made the seats of learning very hard, Lord."

"A good answer," boomed the Lord. "You shall be of My kingdom where all are sinners and scholars."

"Bring in the dictators," roars the crowd.

"Dictators, by the right, quick march," orders an official.

Adolf and Benny, grin and gesture, truculent and defiant.

"Cut their throats," commands the Lord. "They were heads on earth, here, for My sake, they must be headless."

The rest surged forward. Hope was in their breasts now, beer still in their bellies. "What can be your sentence for us?" they sang.

"You are the saved, the favoured ones. You shall be nearest Me. You did nothing on earth. You knew nothing. Do likewise here and there shall be peace."

ROSSARD.

I Love Music

There is significance in the fact that in the radio programmes sessions of worth-while music are so often described as for the "music-lover." The "lowbrow" (as he is pleased to call himself) accepts the term, too. He is no more likely to tune into a "music-lover's hour" than he is to ignore the call of the local picture-show on Saturday night for the purpose of staying home to read Shelley. He knows what he will get. Definitely there is a tacit admission from everyone, even the infidels, that good music, what people usually call "classical" music, is the only music one can fall in love with. And there is no worthier, no lovelier, no more constant mistress.

My first experience with near-good music was at very early school, when to illustrate a lesson on the blithe season my teacher played on a gramophone Mendelssohn's "Spring Song." Being eleven, and therefore culturally as well as physically infantile, I thought "Spring Song" incredibly attractive. I remember that I was ashamed of my interest, which I considered an effeminate weakness and strove to disguise by darting eloquently indifferent glances at the walls and ceiling. When Mendelssohn had at length unwound himself and the sugary strains subsided with a last exaggerated shudder on the strings (the orchestra was an inferior one) the school-master berated me for my insensitiveness to "good music." The confounded old middle-brow!

Thus someone had tossed a dash of water on the plant. But a drought of cultural neglect was to ensue. For many years I heard no more Mendelssohn, no more anything except the worthless stuff that is produced en masse by American "song-writing teams," and ground out even more formidably en masse by armies of suburban radios. There was no radio in our house, no one being sufficiently interested in music, good or bad, to worry about one. Neighbours, however, made up the deficiency unasked, as neighbours will.

So I came in the natural course of things to look on crooners

with tender regard, and on "In the Shadows Let Me Come and (do something—I forget what) to You" as aural ravishment. "Git Along Little Dogie" sent shivers of delight up my spine. I wrote letters in my childish hand to various journals in support of fellow lowbrows howling protest against "classical" music, as we called it, on the national programmes. By this time I had begun to study the technical side of wireless, and as a first essay built out of my extremely limited means what is known as a "crystal set," simplest and lowest-powered type of receiver. With the head-phones compressing by ears until they were distressingly sore I usually spent the last hour before midnight listening alone to the A.B.C. dance-band. Then I sank into slumber, bathed in beauty. I was the complete cultural savage.

I had potentialities, however. One fateful Sunday night during a talk from Perth in which I was especially interested the overland transmission broke down. The ensuing gap was filled in by something of Handel, simple and really good. I felt like Keats' "watcher of the skies." The sensation of hearing beauty was a delirious, unfamiliar ecstacy; and an appetite of whose existence I had never before been conscious was stimulated to strong hunger.

But it was an abortive beginning. The "classic hours" I tried to listen to with my painful head-phones contained fare too strong for unpractised digestion. Discouraged I began to turn once more to the churnings-out of the American musical mountebanks.

From this catastrophic recession I was saved by the sprouting in the family of a sudden interest—I forget for what reason —in the acquisition of a piano. And a piano was acquired. On this everything was played from "Laces and Graces" (Lord, that was an awful thing!) to a grossly bad arrangement of the first twenty bars or so of the "Jupiter" symphony. It provided just what I needed—a really good dose of mainly middle-brow music as a stepping stone to better things. I graduated slowly through anonymous schottisches, Strauss waltzes, Liszt rhapsodies, Tchaikowsky suites, to my first bewildered taste of Mozart, Beethoven, Moussorgsky, Schubert, Brahms, Bach. They gave me the kind of painful, sensuous delight that shivering evokes. They needed getting used to.

I had by this time begun to earn a living, so that I possessed funds of my own, and had no need to attempt to cajole money for the pursuit of culture from unsympathetic family members. After a good deal of skimping I bought a gramophone and a stock of records—"Marche Militaire," Liszt's 2nd Hungarian Rhapsody, and sundry other rubbish (yes, including "Spring Song"). I had no radio—I had abandoned the "crystal set," which proved really **too** hard on the ears—but I attended concerts. My education proceeded apace, and it was not long before I had disposed (with blushes) of my original records and got rid of the squeaking gramophone. The records I caused to fall from elevated positions to the floor, where they usually divided neatly into two halves. I relished that destruction. I wanted something much better or nothing at all.

I wanted better music and better reproduction. I had become an erudite radio technician by this stage—that is, on paper, for it is an expensive interest to translate into actuality. Being thus in a position to appreciate the enormous advantages of electrical reproduction I determined to build for myself the finest possible electrical reproducer within reasonable financial limits. The most reasonable limits, however, were then only vaguely appreciable through the fog of my bankruptcy. It meant at least a year of thrift.

It was a year, too, of yearning, as delicious as it was keen; a year of anticipatory lip-licking, of incessant, starved longing. The one hunger tinged my last thoughts before I fell asleep, and my first on waking. Day and night I pined, like a too-enthusiastic lover.

Further, during the year I bought records, this time that I shall never need to break, that I shall never "grow out of." It was a most unpractical procedure, no doubt, since I had nothing to turn them into music. They were simply an uninsured risk on my hands. But their possession gave me intense anticipatory delight; they helped to allay the long pangs of unfed waiting; they helped me "travel in hope."

The year that placed such a strain on my imagination went by, as years must—and left me comparatively penniless. My amplifier was as far off as ever. It is distressing to think how

many barren ages I might have endured had not the miraculous happened. I won the requisite amount by backing horses—no doubt the first occasion on which bookmakers ever contributed cash to a cultural cause. As a friend suggested, they probably would be quite annoyed if they knew.

Building the reproducer was a long and tedious labour. Looking back on the amount of energy and patience that I expended on the task I am astonished and appalled. Only the promise of heavenly delight could have made me plod on as I did to its completion. Actually the job was finished, the last irksome detail completed, one evening at about eight. The first record to be set revolving on the turn-table was a Mozart overture, that to his early opera "La Finta Giardiniera," a piece from which I expected great things. All that emerged from the speaker was a distorted whisper. Suppressing a frenzied desire to batter the amplifier to atoms with an axe, squashing the black rage and disappointment that rose within me, I forced myself to examine the circuit calmly for the fault. Luckily I found it with ease. (For technically accomplished readers I might explain that the stream of electrons faithfully carrying the Mozartian pulsations through space in the first valve was being sourly turned from its objective—the anode—by a screengrid connected to earth instead of to a point four hundred volts above zero.)

Finding and rectifying the error, however, took some time, so that, ready for my second test, I found that the remainder of the household was cloaked in slumber. Great caution was indicated by this unfortunate circumstance, since, handling an instrument capable of waking the dead, I might have drawn the wrath of the whole family about my ears by one careless move. But at the least I was intent on discovering whether there remained any more faults. Accordingly I switched on. The valves lit with modest cherry tints; electrons bombarding the glass of the two big output valves gave a rich, stealthily shifting fluorescence of blue light on the envelopes. Turning the volume control hard over I scraped my thumb delicately over the tip of the pick-up needle. There was a splutter from the speaker that almost bulged the walls of the room. It worked, apparently. I listened with terror in my heart for agonised cries of reproach and vituperation from family members jerked from their

slumbers by that shattering rattle. But no. Miraculously I had disturbed no one. So easing my bitterness with numerous maledictions on my family, I switched off to wait till morning should allow me to hear my Mozart.

Getting to sleep was difficult. I was so exhaustingly excited. I hated having to wait till morning in deference to cloddish sleepers.* For myself, I should be delighted to be awakened at midnight by Mozart. Why should anyone have different views?

I woke at four, and lay fuming for two and a half hours. At six-thirty, I considered, everyone should be awake, even if not stirring. Anyway, damn them! So I rose. There followed the moment of supreme consummation, the instant when I placed the first record, the Mozart, on the spinning turn-table, and letting the pick-up needle slide gently into the initial groove, waited through the opening surface-noise for the first invisible splash of aural colour from the speaker. High notes with the purity of stars, lows full-blooded, staccato passages with outlines as keen as the smack of a rifle, full-orchestral tumults unblurred, like peaks against the sky—what a stream of unfamiliar glory spilled out of the fabric-covered speaker hole into the empty cup of morning stillness! I shall die remembering that moment, and the long deferred realisation of stores of superlative beauty to be tapped by turning a switch. First Mozart! How such paltry things as first kisses shrink beside that starry memory of waiting through the surface-scratch of the empty grooves for the first whip-lash of ear-borne ecstacy to fall upon the expectant rawness of the mind; memory of the rich reward of loveliness, brilliant, lucid, like the light of that summer morning. May I die if I ever cease to remember it!

R. MATHEWS.

* To avoid domestic complications I had better mention that one other member of the family must be exempted from this opprobrium.

Diminution

The littleness has come. The tiny creature
On the floor sees the crease on trousers
Pointing to the pendant enormity of stomach
Girt with golden chain:
Crumpled tie and double roll of flesh
To wide nostril. A fever shakes the puny frame
As, impotent, he holds minute discourse
And strikes the leather on the boot,
Distraught, he takes his little orchestra
And bids the drums to sound their futile theme.
Unmoved the giant sips his wine, bangs his table,
Chuckling at the unseen sport,
Uproariously he shouts his freedom,
And below I beat my head against the leg
Of a walnut chair.

K. H. BRADSHAW.

Glimpse

The blood-beaked crows flap
About the helpless beast—
There in the shade of the pepper-willows,
Gazing into the leaves, eyes streaked
With blood.
Far off the dog barks at the jumbling mass
Of dirty-white sheep.
His mouth drips freely
And he stands content beside a tuft;
Till, mouth closing swiftly,
He bounds, black in the grass,
To hem in the wanderers.
Then he trots again in the moving shadow
Of horse and rider.

K. H. BRADSHAW.

Gee She Was Pretty

Joe was not going surfing this Saturday afternoon. He thought he'd ride his bike along the river bank, under the pines. He could pretend he was fishing.

The sea wall was about eighteen inches wide at the top, made of concrete, and it wasn't a bad place to sit in the sun and wet a line. Even if you only caught a few toads there was always something to watch—in the shallow water at the foot of the wall, for instance, crabs and darting little shoals of "sardines," the movements of current-twisted sand and seaweed; and sometimes water-magnified bream flashed in close, shining their bellies, which could give you a thrill if you had a number three gut bent over your finger.

Behind him was the grass river bank with its selfconscious row of pines, scattered Moreton Bay figs leering over tilted wooden benches and, further along, a band rotunda. From the Royal across the road, faint enough to be pleasant, jumbled a race broadcast, thick amiable clink of glasses in the shady bar, and an occasional grumble of laughter. Joe listened to these and waited for Lou. She usually came past here with her girl friend about a quarter to two, going to the matinee at the Plaza. He'd seen the programme on the hoarding near the station and on the handbill he'd disentangled from the spokes of his front wheel. Deanna Durbin. She was a bit like Lou. Joe ran his tongue over his thick, sun-broken lips and drooled a little, wiped it off on the back of his hand, and wiped his hand through his knotted hair, adding a fish scale or two. They'd tried to make him stop that at school, but Joe had never had more than a vague idea of anything that happened at school. Usually the teachers were content to leave him alone, and he gradually became a sort of accepted fixture like the press, or the pastels on the wall signed with things like "Helen Kelly, Grade III." One of the masters had pinned one of Joe's up once. They were supposed to copy the parrot on the poster drawing-pinned to the

board. It was on a perch, eating a Sao biscuit, and doing the same things to it that Joe did to his food, but he had drawn it in flight, not even attempting any of the plumage detail the rest of the class were trying to copy. His parrot had been flung across the page of his Landseer book like an angry, startled exclamation, and succeeding teachers and classes (Joe stayed permanently in the same class, being only shuffled round a little to give the teachers a rest) had laughed at it, so it came to be accepted that it had been put up because it was so stupid and bad. Joe drew in his pad a lot, especially when he couldn't do L.C.M.'s and H.C.F.'s, and once a master had taken him and his book to the headmaster's office; Joe had heard him say "phallic." He didn't know what the trouble was about, but he'd been trying to improve the spire of the Methodist Church, which was visible through the window; to decide what shape it ought to be to match the big ugly window in the front which was, in outline at least, surprisingly and individualistically Gothic.

He looked to see if Lou was coming yet, but there was only a woman with a fox terrier. He wondered if Lou would see him. She generally did, and it seemed to Joe she always looked at him in a special way. Gee she was pretty. Joe, who could swim better than even the life-savers, had long phantasies about rescuing her from the surf at the Devil's Cauldron, and grabbing the top jaws of Alsatians who were attacking her and bending their heads back till their necks broke, and catching three-pound bream off the jetty with his light bamboo while she was watching. He nearly always kissed her after, but the phantasies never got further than that because of the thrumming tide of emotion which washed him and because he couldn't make up scenes in his mind but only shapes and tunes and colours where he was in the middle of a big warm soft cloud of tenderness and indescribable lovely-hurtful desires.

Suddenly she was there, coming towards him. He always thought that, and sometimes he was able to believe it, but really it was only in his direction. At the sight of her the long, high beauty in Joe's heart started and flurried like a disturbed mullet, bursting into clamour in his chest, trying to get out his mouth and tightening unbearably in his throat. He felt a little sick and unreal. Gee she was pretty . . .

Behind Lou and her girl friend were two youths in creams,

hurrying to overtake them and whistling. The girls turned as they came up and Joe caught scraps of talk and giggles. There was some sky-larking, and then something went through Joe like a spear as they moved on towards him and he saw that the youth with Lou had his arm around her, lightly and experimentally. She made an undetermined shrug of protest and let it remain.

He squirmed further round on the wall as they approached, and with his usual unselfconsciousness stared fixedly at Lou. Something of the things in his mind must have communicated itself to his bleary and unco-ordinated eyes, for the four of them were looking at him in amazement. Lou said something to her youth, and he looked at Joe angrily, but after a glance at the thickness of Joe's biceps below the flannel shirt did nothing. They passed on, leaving him to his fishing.

But Joe wasn't fishing. He was rocking backwards and forwards on the sea-wall, moaning softly to himself, blubbering furrows down the dirt on his cheeks, and a cloud greyed over the sun and the sea wind freshened. Finally he stopped rocking and bent his head down between his legs and slowly, passively overbalanced. The tide was ebbing and he dived more cleanly than he could ever do before into six inches of water onto the oyster rocks and the toads slanted off in fright and a patch of water became pink.

Gee she was pretty . . .

PETER MILES.

Country Dance

Drums, violin, accordion and sax
Make up the band. Theirs is no subtle play
Of chiaroscuro in harmony,
But pounding rhythm echoed by the beat
Of rising, falling, weaving feet,
That step and pause upon the floor of wax.

The sax is good. His vibrant notes outpour
After a spate of melancholic wailing.
With shirtsleeves rolled, his arm in unavailing
Gesture, wipes across his hot moist forehead,
When the last long drawn quivering note has sped,
And the dancers slowly shuffle from the floor.

Here there are no footstep-deadening carpets
Beside a richly gleaming redwood floor.
No amber liquids in a thin stemmed glass,
(Bottle to mouth, and Dago wine is raw.)
No shaded lights discreetly glow on nacreous flesh
While hum of muted talk hangs in the air,
Chesterfields proffered from a thin gold case,
Fragrance of furs, and of the women's hair.

But there is laughter rising gaily free,
And lovers glide and sway, knee pressed to knee.
Cheek soft to cheek, while the hours are flying,
They dance in a dream that has no dying.

MARCEINE IA DICKFOS.

Posthumous . . .

Now I am dead.

But once I lived amongst you. Though there are many of you whose faces I have never seen, I once shared your lives, walked the same roads, lay on the same beaches, maybe jostled you on the 8.30, or stood beside you on a pavement, waiting for the green light to shine.

That was before I donned a khaki jacket and the stout boots, in each of which lived a squeak that was slightly off-key. They made a man of me, those boots. My feet within them itched and tingled with a wanderlust, and thirst for adventure rose within my throat, for I did not know what lay before me.

I have walked a long way since then. My feet soon grew tired and it was an earthy thirst that consumed me. One day, suddenly, I saw my written name. It stared up at me from the top of a pile of letters. I dropped my haversack and my weariness. With stumbling fingers I turned the pages, reading them in hungry gulps. They were crumpled and stained but blessed and sweet, for they had come from home.

Homespun, too, was the fabric of my thought. While I lived in darkness, which seemed blacker after each jagged streak of fire, I dreamed of a corner of the world where the nights are for sleeping and where lamps still shine softly in the dark streets.

My thoughts were like flotsam. Often waves of fatigue washed them from my mind, yet they were precious, for they were the only things in my life which held any beauty; and I could carry them with me when everything else must be left behind.

And there is a woman. She has not yet received my last letter. I wish that she might never, for I know how it will be. Her eyes will suddenly come alive again and she will hold the

envelope in her hands, as if it were a spun dream. Don't open it, for I have written to you of a future which now cannot happen, and I know you will grieve over that. How can I make you see that it is only the next minute that we have planned together?

Though it is I for whom the bell tolls, my comrades will come back to you. Then you must believe me, for men cannot black out the heavens nor the spirit of a prayerful people.

J. DINNING.

"Le Temps S'en Va"

What unrequested messenger is this ?
Turning my pleasure to a strange dismay
As one who cometh to a glad array
And stays the dancing with a word amiss
Of Death and War; and into an abyss
Of silence dies the music. All the gay
And happy soul of youth hath sudden stay
To gaze into itself and solemn is.
Alas to know, alas to know I must,
The requiem of youth, the transiency
Of hopes and dreams that once were all of me
And Time hath stricken to oblivion's dust.
In him hath trusted life to heal its rhyme:
Time healer ! Nay ! the very wound is Time.

G.C.L.H.

Shakespeare and Free Verse

A South Australian writer has recently claimed, amongst others, Shakespeare as a user of "free verse." I propose here to examine that claim. To do so, it is necessary first to ask: What is "free verse"? And asking this question, one is met with an initial difficulty of first magnitude. Each practitioner of "free verse" has his own peculiar freedoms, his own formlessness. In such a position, to define is impossible; what can be done is to give examples. Here are three:

(*a*) *"Adam and Eve were born to evening dress*
In the southern confines
Of Belgravia,
Eve was very artistic, and all that,
And felt the fall
Quite dreadfully.
Cain was such a man of the world
And belonged to every club in London;
His father simply adored him,
—But had never really liked Abel
Who was rather a milk-sop."

(*b*) *"I am like that tree:*
—Downweighing
all my strong up-struggling boughs
is gray, dead wood:
something
has withered in me
each dry day . . . .
some hope I thought youth-lasting."

(*c*) *"The lamp said,*
'Four o'clock,
Here is the number on the door.
Memory!
You have the key,
The little lamp spreads a ring on the stair.
Mount.
The bed is open; the tooth-brush hangs on the wall,
Put your shoes at the door, sleep, prepare for life.'
The last twist of the knife."

The quality differentiating these three passages from traditional or orthodox verse is, it seems to me, a negative one. Whereas verse from the earliest times has involved metre or a certain easily perceived pattern constantly adhered to, the three passages above are metre-less. I should say also that none of them possesses a distinctive language pattern. Example (*a*) is prose cut into unequal lines, and given a capital letter for the beginning of each line simply because that is one of the orthodox conventions—a very minor convention that could be ignored without loss. Were passage (*a*) written as prose, no one could, I submit, set it up again as it now stands.

Example (*b*) I shall not comment on, except to draw attention to the curious position of the word "something," which seems by all language usage to belong to the next line. To place it by itself seems a merely arbitrary proceeding.

Example (c) speaks for itself.

Did Shakespeare use "free verse"? So far as the great bulk of his work is concerned, the answer must be a direct "no." The bulk of Shakespeare and the best of Shakespeare, right down to:

"Our revels now are ended: these our actors
Are melted into air, into thin air,
And like the baseless fabric of this vision
The cloud-capped Towers, the gorgeous Palaces,
The solemn Temples, the great Globe itself,
Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve,
And like this insubstantial pageant faded
Leave not a rack behind."

of "The Tempest," is unmistakably blank verse. But of "Lear," "Antony and Cleopatra," and "Macbeth," a modern Shakespearean authority has testified that much of them is written "not in formal blank verse at all, but in a free, rhythmic verse." This authority, G. B. Harrison, says elsewhere in the volume I am at present handling: "In King Lear, as in his earlier plays, Shakespeare was again consciously experimenting with language, but impatiently rather than joyously. He was no longer content with blank verse. He wrote speeches in great sweeps and not line by line, and even the formal pattern of five stresses was submerged in the rush of the whole."

Now for some such a pronouncement settles the matter. They equate the expression "a free, rhythmic verse" with "free verse," but I am not at all sure that such equating would express Harrison's mind in the matter. Even taking things superficially, I should point out that Harrison pronounces the three crucial plays to be written "not in **formal** blank verse at all." I should stress the word "formal." I should stress it with assurance, because Harrison uses the word again in the second extract I have quoted from him: "In King Lear . . . even the **formal** pattern of five stresses was submerged in the rush of the whole." This may have the air of quibbling, so I pass from it to the examples Harrison gives in illustration of his critical pronouncement.

In Lear, Edgar speaks:

"Yet better thus, and known to be contemn'd,
Than still contemn'd and flattered, to be worst:
The lowest and most dejected thing of Fortune,
Stands still in esperance, lives not in fear:
The lamentable change is from the best,
The worst returns to laughter. Welcome then,
Thou unsubstantial air that I embrace:
The wretch that thou hast blown unto the worst,
Owes nothing to thy blasts.
But who comes here? My father poorly led?
World, world, O world!
But that thy strange mutations make us hate thee,
Life would not yield to age."

Now the first eight lines of this passage are in blank verse. Not only so, but each line has a punctuation mark at its end, so that not even the freest reader could read the passage but as blank verse. The ninth line is short, but iambic, and so is the thirteenth; the tenth is a blank verse line and so is the twelfth; the eleventh line is somewhat different. Taking Harrison's arrangement of the last five lines (not the only possible one), I submit that the three shorter lines, with their fewer stresses do not overthrow the general blank verse effect. They represent legitimate variation—variation made for a certain purpose; for example, line eleven to show a rise in emotional intensity. And they adhere to iambic scansion.

The next piece Harrison adduces comes from Macbeth's soliloquy:

"If it were done, when 'tis done, then 'twere well
It were done quickly: if th' assassination
Could trammel up the consequence, and catch
With his surcease, success: that but this blow
Might be the be-all and the end-all. Here,
But here, upon this bank and shoal of time,
We'ld jump the life to come. But in these cases,
We still have judgment here, that we but teach
Bloody instructions, which being taught, return
To plague th' inventor. This even-handed Justice
Commends th' ingredients of our poison'd chalice
To our own lips. He's here in double trust." et seq.

Anyone sufficiently interested can turn up the rest of the speech having in it fine poetry (such a blank verse line as "the deep damnation of his taking-off"), but containing no short lines, and no line in which five stresses are not easily discernible. Now, though such a passage was obviously not written line by line but in great sweeps, I submit that the whole is unmistakably blank verse. It is not lyric blank verse, if one may use such an expression; it is not end-stopt blank verse; but it is dramatic blank verse clearly recognisable as such.

The third passage is also from Macbeth, and what Harrison says of it is very interesting. So I give his treatment *in extenso*: "When a Folio text is closely studied it is clear that much of Macbeth is not written in formal blank verse at all, but in a free, rhythmic verse; so also is Antony and Cleopatra. But readers and even critics have not realised that Shakespeare often wrote in a free verse, because they are not accustomed to use the Folio. For an instance: After the murder of Duncan, Lady Macbeth and her husband are surprised by the knocking; she tries to bring him to his senses. In the authorised text the speech appears:

My hands are of your colour, but I shame
To wear a heart so white. [Knocking within.] *I hear a knocking*
At the south entry; retire we to our chamber;
A little water clears us of this deed;
How easy it is, then! Your constancy
Hath left you unattended. [Knocking within.] *Hark! more knocking.*
Get on your night gown, lest occasion call us,
And show us to be watchers. Be not lost
So poorly in your thoughts.

The quick, jerky utterance is much more effectively shown in the Folio printing:

My hands are of your colour: but I shame
To wear a heart so white.
Knock.
I hear a knocking at the south entry:
Retire we to our chamber:
A little water clears us of this deed.
How easy it is then? Your constancy
Hath left you unattended.
Knock.
Hark, more knocking.
Get on your nightgown, lest occasion call us,
And show us to be watchers: be not lost
So poorly in your thoughts."

It cannot be doubted that the Folio way of printing this speech is far the better. Doubtless, also, it destroys the academic neatness of the blank verse by giving us five short lines as Shakespeare's real intention. Yet commend the real technical freedom of the second setting as we will, the passage in both settings alike remains blank verse. Blank verse gives the norm, as it were, and in all strictness maintains the majority of the lines. The shorter lines are a legitimate and subtle variation made for a dramatic purpose. They heighten the effect. And finally, considered metrically, they are written in iambics.

Reviewing then these three crucial passages, I submit that all are essentially blank verse, and that on comparison with the three passages of "free verse" I set at the beginning of this essay, there are no observable likenesses. Shakespeare at his freest is strictly metrical; they are not. I submit further that Harrison's expressions "a free verse," "a free rhythmic verse," are not equatable with "free verse."

MARTIN HALEY.

Compleat Fisherman

I feel the slimy worm go wriggling on
And smell the honest smell of mullet-gut
Reeking the bows, where in the dark is John
Thinking of other times with eyes half-shut,
When bait so tempting to the seas has gone,
And not a nibble from the weedy rut
Beneath, where lurks, no doubt, Leviathan.

I hear the mullet from the ocean's deep
Coming up river in the feeding tide
Ripple the surface where the sea-weeds creep
Like silent floes where Nordic whalers ride.
The current quickens and the tailor leap
—There goes my trace. That fellow won't be fried—
And John has wakened from his semi-sleep.

A nibble? or the river and the sand?
A bite ! A bream-bite on my subtle prawn.
Again ! A little line to his demand.
He's on, a two-pound tugger—struggle-worn
But fighting still, a gallant final stand,
Now rising, darting, gleaming to the morn.
But John is first. His fish is in his hand.

A long pull home into a wisp of rain
With fish-tails beating in the heavy creel,
And oars plup-chogging through a frosted pane
Of liquid glass that gurgles to the keel ;
The grated beach, the tramp, the mugs to drain,
And my lost fish as lengthy as an eel,
And John's, of course, as long and half again.

G.C.L.H.

I'll Say!

The youth pushed the swing and watched it carry his companion higher and higher, until her dark hair fell from about the sides of her head and strained toward the earth, and her outstretched feet all but brushed the leaves of the feathery-foliaged Poinciana above. The short, open cloak she wore floated from her shoulders like a train, showing him as he gazed upwards the exquisiteness of her form, thinly clothed. He heard a laugh fall from her mouth as she tried vainly to touch the fretted leaves above her. Then he stepped aside as she began to fall back to him. Faster she flew until she had swept past where he stood, a vision of cheeks strenuously flushed, of eyes mirth-narrowed, of bare limbs stretched tautly. She drooped her head backwards as she rose until her heaven-coloured eyes looked into the bland unbrokenness of day above, as if, he thought, she meant to kindle the blossoms of the tree with her mouth's deeper red. But now she had reached the end of her upward flight, and begun the wide arc of her return. A smile from her side-turned face, and she had flown on, helped by the gentle thrust of his hand. And again his enchanted eyes followed her ascent. How completely she epitomised all loveliness! Beauty had made of life a looking-glass, and here was her image. The loveliest of evening's stars, looking down on the girl, might have thought it gazed upon its own echo in a quiet pool.

Rhythmically the ropes that bore her groaned as she swept to and fro. Did they mourn in sympathy with him? What waste, what sacrilege that so unutterably fair a thing, in soul as in form should be wedded to one completely unworthy of the boon; a husband to whom her beauty meant no more than wine to a toper; who saw, though uncomprehendingly, her outward loveliness, yet to whom her inner perfection had neither being nor import; a mate who could neither add to nor share her excellence, with whom she was as ill-assorted as heaven with earth, as beauty with ugliness, yet who looked upon her

with a jealous and intolerant possessiveness. Did she not belong to him just as his automobile belonged to him? How young she was for this—not quite twenty—too young to suffer so. But now she had met him to whom her soul's subtlest adytum had meaning and delight; now beauty had entered her life, quietly, as warmth enters the air of morning; and her husband looked upon this secret strangeness with slow anger and vengeful suspicion.

But they thrust out thoughts of him, as they played beneath that Poinciana, with its passion-hued flowers. One of the blossoms had fallen in her hair, and clung there, like a fire-fly in darkness. The youth reached out and steadied the swing. It halted abruptly as the girl touched the ground with her feet. She remained upon it, half-seated, half-standing, her fingers clasped about the thick, black ropes, in strange contrast with their coarseness. Red patterns on her forearms showed where the cordage had pressed upon them. The youth came up behind her, and she felt him place his hands upon her waist, beneath the thin fabric of her cloak. He held his cheek against her hair, and she turned her face until she could reach him with her mouth—her mouth with lips like two slugs lately surfeited on geranium petals, and now, encrimsoned by their food, lying side by side in well-fed somnolence. A kiss as light as the touch of the flowers that fell upon her shoulders, and then she had drawn her lips away, as if she feared she had been too rash. But the smile in her eyes and mouth belied that. His head drooped forward over her shoulder as he kissed her cheek, her throat, the small cusp that formed one breast. Then he had slipped round to her front, kneeling, crushing the crimson blossoms which, though thicker than dead leaves in an autumn wood, were no more numerous than the kisses these two would barter. His hands were still at her waist. His face was level with them now, and he buried it in the softness of her as a child does in its mother's lap. He felt her hands touch his hair, so lightly touch, he almost thought it but his fancy. He looked up. She was smiling down on him now, as tenderly as a star, and her eyes, too, bore each a little star at the inner corner. He felt his very soul tremble as he watched her. So beautiful she looked, only the soul's tears were tribute deep enough. How sweet it were forever thus to kneel before such divine transcendancy, immutably adoring. . . . Bring forth, then, some serpent-dowered head,

that with its horror may eternalise this loveliness in marble fairer than the very flesh from which it froze. But no! What cruelty it would be so to pluck from his lips this most miraculous mead of her love; or chill into pale immobility her overbrimming mouth! . . . The youth stretches his arms upward until his fingers touch the nacre-smoothness of her cheeks, like a supplicant. She will not deny him. See, she has fallen forward, like a flower bending before a wind . . . and shedding as she falls her kisses, as the perfume of the blossom spills from its tilted cup of petals. . . . Let us not disturb them with the profanity of our gaze. Let him sip from her in solitude, let the richness of her mouth, overflowing with fruits and flowers, seep into his, as mists are soaked in sunset ruby. She hungers—in loneliness let him feed her. Tree of the innumerable lanterns, what lovelier scene hast thou lighted?

Yes, let us leave these two. Let us leave only the myriad-lamped boughs above them to witness, and whisper in muted wonder at such beauty. And what secret talk they make among themselves, like the beating of a million moth-wings! Whence comes this alarm? Is it fear that imbues these frail fronds with such trembling? Do they, from their many-lighted towers, see what we cannot? Yet what harm can be here, beneath this calmly shining sun, in this cool, blue morning, whose breath, before it reaches us, seems first to drift through Elysium? But wait! Can it be—No! No! Blind, sacreligious Fate, of all mortals thou woulds't not lead to this consecrated spot that one most debased, most likely to violate its holiness—her husband! Yet, sorrow and terror, it is so! Thickets and bushes, bar his profane path! Tear him with hidden thorns and spurs; stab at him with dagger-fingers; snare his feet with ambushed roots and hurl his gross body to the earth that whelped it; baffle him with stub-born-woven branches, less yielding than dungeon-bars; and stir to vengeful life in his path the sleeping snake, death-bent! God! is all prayer useless? He comes, he comes! He has seen—his mouth is a pitiless sword-edge, his face a mirror of baleful purpose, more potent to freeze out life than any snake-haired witch! Destroyer of the beautiful, vandal, murderer—he levels his hand, and a shower of red blossoms rains down with the report, a last benediction. . . .

It is over. Peace, it will do no good to weep. We must leave them—hush! There is no movement now beneath the

tree, save where the timorous wind may stir the fallen flowers, or a strand or two of long, dark hair. . . .

They found them, later, as we have left them, with their beauty still unravaged by death. The single bullet had killed them both, piercing first his heart, and then tearing through the tender defences of the girl's breast to a lodgement in her spine. In his death-convulsion he had bitten her mouth, and her blood was upon their faces, like the stain of her lips' yet undimned redness—penalty, perhaps, for past kisses. As they had lived so had they died, in a sacred unity of spirit—and flesh.

How embarassing! *

R. MATHEWS.
February, 1939.

* See title.

Mozart

The mind of Mozart was a star, radiating light of ecstacy-whiteness. Light is the fundamental quality of his music.

When Mozart is played, Mozart at his best, orchestra and listening mind form two poles loaded with a million volts, and between them strikes the white, furious arc of the music. The orchestra is an electrode bearing the shattering potentials of a thunder-cloud, and venting them in crackling explosions of sense-shrivelling glory.

Always there is light. The kind of light one senses to be cored in the sun—an eye-assaulting madness, burning up the retina like a white-hot skewer thrust through the eye-ball.

Most of the light comes from the strings. No one can handle them as Mozart did. For other composers the strings merely smoulder; Mozart sets them fiercely alight. He tears a sheet of flame from them, a sudden, broad white curtain that towers and drops again; or he draws, as from a furnace-melt, thick, sustained wires of intense glory; or weightless, star-bright threads. Light comes from the strings, shimmering torrents, jets and spurts of it, balefully bright; long white swords of light, drawn slowly over the agonised rawness of the brain, sinking deep, searing as they slice; dazzle-thonged lashes of light, falling like lightning on the senses, incising like blades where they fall.

There are fools, aurally blind, who can see only "gaiety" in the intense, white flicker of Mozart's music. Did any of these fools ever dare to call "gay" the deadly flutter of lightning?

In the slow movements the quality of the light differs. It is no longer terrible. The dazzling frenzy of an electric arc gives place to the remote, white beauty of a star. Its shivering passion is underscored, not dulled, by its starry coldness. Some-

times the light is in breathless flashes, like short, broken exhalations of breath and sound from a sobbing throat; or in long, quivering ribbons, like a plucked star-ray. It no longer stabs and burns through the mind in white-hot spears. It is mild and passionately tender. It may be born like a pin-point at the zenith that grows outwards until the whole heaven is a dome of cool, pure light, and then shrinks once more. It may arrow itself upward in a long, fair cord of beauty to the height where the sweetly dazzled sense just ceases to climb with it, poise an overwhelming instant and then be drawn swiftly down into itself again. And the centre of the watching mind freezes to a crystal of clear radiance that slowly expands until the whole brain is whitely illumined from within . . .

Mozart is light!

R. MATHEWS.

Symphonic Concert

Urban and smug,
Behind my sleek comrades
I raise white hands
To clap a languid approbation.
God ! But I hate the conductor's smirk.
The wind from the valleys has swept
The mist to the heavens, showers of gold
In the sun. The secret forests
Have stirred and shouted richly.
Watch his curtsey! Elegantly he swings
Preposterous black tails to the orchestra.
Simpering, the musicians rise, toying
With their bows. And these have roused
The slumbering giants ! These, the shining knights
Whose loom-and-shuttle movements turn
The papered black and white
To coloured vistas of delight.
Could my eyes be shut to candelabras,
Tonsured heads, fat necks,
Imitation pearls, paper rustlings
And the solemn chewing of the 'cellist,
Could my eyes not see the brilliant sweat
Of crowds, the metal microphones
Like spiders in mid-air—
Then could the stained-glass purity
Stream unruffled through the stillness.
Methinks there's a merry orchestra
Among the gums, whose notes
Are not the quaver nor the crotchet,
But the playing of a million coloured glasses
With the dew and the rain.
The dripping silence and the birds
At play.
And yet my soul would rather tangle
With the skirts of fashion's clothing
Just to glimpse the sweetness
And rotundity of harmony
Conceived in solitude.

K. H. BRADSHAW.

Arctic Death

Extract from the columns of the "London Standard," 18th December, 1938:

" . . . though the actual cause of death remains a complete mystery. It appears that Derwent Elrick made definite attempts to reach the fireplace heaped to overflowing with cinders. Medical opinion is unanimously agreed that the deceased author was frozen to death. But how could such an event be possible in a room as highly heated as this must have been, and with an outside atmospheric temperature of just under forty degrees Fahrenheit? Elrick lived by himself at 'The Tors,' and apparently had not received any visitors on the night of the tragedy. An open verdict was returned owing to the impossibility of determining whether death was due to natural causes, accident, suicide or murder."

Extract from trance speech obtained during seance at Aveling Society for Psychic Research, 10th Jan., 1939:

"Make no delay. For God's sake make no delay. 'The Tors' must be destroyed. I am powerless to prevent."

From the same source, 14th March, 1939:

"You lack faith and refuse. I am powerless to prevent. Soon there will be a new tenant . . . "

From the same source, 10th April, 1939:

. . . On this occasion it was nearly three-quarters of an hour before the medium, although in deep trance for some time, at last spoke. The control was apparently the same that inspired scattered intelligible remarks in January and March last. Mr. J. Sanders took down the following account in shorthand; only rarely were words indistinct, and the meaning was always quite clear. The medium often stopped speaking for minutes on end, as though exhausted by the effort; but the urgency of the control seemed to sweep away physical difficulties.

"Blue—blue—lapis lazuli. I see them always before me.

It was horrible—'The Tors'—I have warned you before. Why will you not listen to me? Must I tell all? How can I get the strength to do so? They were so blue——." (Here the medium moaned somewhat, breathing heavily. Suddenly she spoke again in that strange, deep, man's voice): "Alone on the hill near the beech woods—'The Tors'—at the top of the little lane that stretches up from the main road. And nearly ten at night when I saw her standing by the lamp-post at the lane corner; hatless, of medium height, gazing fixedly down the road. The wind was wretchedly cold. I passed close by her and she did not move. The clock was striking ten when I put my key into the lock, and the dull note from St. Peter's, in the valley, echoed from below. It was so strange. That woman, I mean, alone in the night under the lamp-post. Oh, I know there are lots of reasons, and plausible ones too.

"I made some tea before going to bed. I was tired, and dozed in the wicker chair until eleven striking awoke me suddenly. I went up to my room and before turning in looked out of the window and down the lane. She was still there. Through my night-gasses I could see her clearly, gazing steadfastly at the window where I was standing. She was pale and thin and sad in the wan lamplight.

"She had a lover who did not come. She was insane. She had lost her memory. There were many reasons to be guessed, but after twenty minutes more she was still there, staring up at my window. Hurriedly I pulled on some clothes and my walking shoes and went down into the hall. But even then I hesitated for some time—what could I say to her? Without turning up the hall lights I quietly drew the front-door bolts and opened the door. A chilly gust of wind blew in, and I felt a horrible thrill at my heart when I saw her standing on my very doorstep! In as steady a voice as I could manage I asked her what she wanted. She answered in a thin, colourless voice and lowered her eyes.

" 'I'm so cold. So terribly cold.' And seeing that I hesitated she added hastily, 'Won't you let me in to warm myself? You will—won't you?'

"I found myself saying, 'There are the remains of a fire in the kitchen. I can make them up. Come in.' Whereupon she followed me along the hall and almost ran to where the embers feebly glowed in the range. When I observed her by electric

light I saw that she was not more than thirty years old; her figure, though slight, was well formed, and her face, in spite of its pale thinness, was indescribably attractive, possessing a beauty of expression far beyond the apparent possibilities of the features themselves. Lapis lazuli her eyes were. Dark dark blue. She held out delicate hands to the bars as I threw in coal and wood. We did not speak for some moments and I sat and watched her from the wicker chair; I felt really glad that she had come.

" 'You feel warmer now?' She smiled happily for answer. 'Where is your home?' But there was no answer. "Have you no home?' I ventured at last.

"Her blue eyes looked straight into mine. 'Nowhere.' There was a curious timbre in her voice huskily delightful to hear. I insisted somewhat—'Where do you come from then?'

" 'It was so cold. I knew that you would let me in.'

"In the normal order of things I should have felt slightly irritated at this evasion; quite irrationally one assumes the right to probe for all particulars regarding those on whose behalf one performs a charitable act. However, I was pleased rather than provoked and asked her smilingly, 'What made you come to **my** house?'

" 'I don't know. Perhaps the smoke from the chimney——,' and her smile in return so disturbed me that I looked hurriedly away into the fire. 'You are going to send me away?' she asked suddenly.

" 'You asked to be allowed to warm yourself,' I evaded.

" 'That means that you are going to send me away.' She stood up before the fire.

" 'But I am on my own here—how can I? I mean——.'

" 'Then why cannot I stay? There must be room.'

" 'Do you mean to tell me in all honesty that you have nowhere to go?'

" 'You are wondering if I am a thief.'

"In a sudden pet of irritation I said, 'It is quite within the bounds of possibility, isn't it?'

" 'Then I'll go.' She walked towards the door but before she could reach it I blurted out, 'Stay—of course you can stay. There are several rooms upstairs.' And as an afterthought struck me, 'But don't let Mrs. Davis see you when she comes to work to-morrow morning.'

" 'I'll go early. You are so kind,' and she went back slowly to the fire and sat down on the rug.

" 'You haven't told me your name,' I ventured. 'Mine's Elrick.'

" 'I have always been called Stella.' The etiolated paleness of her face set off the intense blue of her eyes.

"This was acting like a damned fool, inviting a complete stranger. . . . It was for the sake of experience, for the sake of art, for the sake of a new plot for a novel, I rationalised; and could not deceive myself, for the thought that she might go away and never return caused me the liveliest distress. If only she would take her eyes from mine. I felt certain she knew she had this power of attraction. To break the intolerable silence I suddenly asked her if she would have something to eat or drink, but she refused both. 'Please excuse me a moment, then. I had better make a room ready for you. The back room will be all right, as I am expecting my brother in a few days' time, and this room is already prepared for him.'

"Descending to the hall again, a short time later, I told myself there was still time to stop all this folly, but an intense urge bade me see this adventure through. I knew it could not be otherwise. Stella looked witchingly up at me. 'It's rather late,' I suggested. 'If you are ready the room is waiting for you.' She rose without a word and followed me upstairs.

" 'I've lit the gas fire for you,' I told her as I opened the door of her room. 'I do hope you will find everything all right —I'm afraid I'm lost without Mrs. Davis.' She answered with a quiet smile and shut the door.

"I tried to sleep, but it was impossible, for I could do nothing but think endlessly of Stella. Where did she come from? And why? She appeared perfectly sane—and extraordinarily alluring. In the darkness of my room I could imagine the pale face with the intense eyes——. I counted the quarters as they boomed out into the gusty night from St. Peter's. It seemed that the night would never pass, but despite my restlessness I must have dozed off to sleep for I was conscious of awaking with a start and being aware of the first dawnlight drifting through the window. I fancied I heard a slight creak in the passage outside—was it this that had awakened me? I wondered. And instantly I thought of Stella and felt an overwhelming urge to reassure myself that she was still there—in my house

—near me——. I opened my door and saw a faint gleam of light shining from beneath the door at the other end of the passage. With the utmost caution I tiptoed to the door listening with strained attention, though all that reached me was a soft hissing sound persistent against the occasional soughing of the late autumn wind.

"For a few moments I stood shivering somewhat outside her door though burning inwardly in an agony of anxiety. Casting caution to the winds I at last knocked twice sharply on the door. There was no reply. I turned the handle and found that the door was unlocked. I pushed it open and entered.

"The gas was flaring at its highest and the room was like an oven. The light was on and I could see that the bed had not been slept in. The room was empty. In the hearth a little pile of burnt matches awakened my curiosity and stemmed for the briefest moment the feeling of utter wretchedness and desperation that welled up within me. Why in God's name had she treated me like this, and for no reason? And then faintly above the wind's sighing I heard the click of the garden-gate.

"I rushed to my room and to the window. A slim figure was hastening down the lane—passed through the yellow cone of fading lamplight and was lost to sight. I stumbled and nearly fell, so fast I ran downstairs and out into the lane. 'Stella! Stella!' I called again and again, and sought for her endlessly, everywhere, till morning was fully come with a grey sky and a soft patter of rain. She had gone and I was sick at heart.

"I knew quite well I loved her to distraction—a mad love without rime or reason that burnt to my heart's very core.

"The morning dragged on. I went down into the village on the chance of finding Stella or, at least, of finding out something about her; but this was a vain hope. A thousand times I tried to reason with myself, to make myself see how utterly preposterous the whole affair was, and all to no avail. It cleared somewhat in the afternoon and a rapidly sinking sun silvered the autumn countryside. I left the front door unfastened and went out into the woods, thinking that a brisk walk would throw off my irrational melancholy and yet hoping against hope that Stella would come back. At least she will be able to get in, I thought.

"The beeches had lost nearly all their leaves and their bare branches would soon weave sad arabesques against the winter

sky. The muddy tracks led on and on, glinting where a ray of sunlight caught the ragged puddles of rainwater, and I went on with them, walking miles in that October afternoon till the sun set and there was no moon.

"But when I reached 'The Tors' again a bright light was shining from the front-room window; and in my heart I knew that Stella had returned. At once my melancholy mood left me and in a spirit of delirious happiness I flung open the drawing-room door.

"The room was overpoweringly hot. Such a fire was burning in the grate that the very bars were red hot and white flame lashed up the chimney. 'Stella!' I cried, a sudden feeling of fear lest the whole house be burnt down momentarily overcoming my joy at seeing her again, 'What on earth are you doing?'

" 'I was so cold; I lit the fire to warm myself.' She was standing beside the great blaze, lovely beyond imagination in the curveting flame-light.

" 'But you might have set the whole place alight!'

" 'I burnt all the wood and coal I could find—every piece.'

"I could not help myself saying, with a touch of irony, 'I'm afraid you'll find it rather chilly when the ashes are cold——'

"For answer she began petulantly to break up the glowing mass with the heavy brass poker, apparently for the pleasure of seeing the crimson sparks fly. Then she looked up at me from where she had knelt and my anger was no more. 'Thank God you've come back,' I murmured and wanted to draw near her, and dared not.

" 'Give me your matches!' Stella exclaimed suddenly, pointing to my hip-pocket; and seeing that I hesitated she repeated, 'Give them to me.'

"I took the box from my pocket and gave it to her. Eagerly she struck a match, watched it flare and then flung it on to the piling ashes. She struck a second and seeing that I made a motion as though to take the box from her she threw it into the embers. I sat on the sofa watching her. It had started to rain again and I could hear the heavy drops plashing against the autumn beeches.

" 'Stella——' and my voice trembled slightly. 'Stella, who are you.'

"She looked up at me quickly and then away from me. 'Why must you know? What difference can it make?'

" 'Tell me who you are,' I repeated, and I must have spoken with a touch of sharpness for she rose hastily and stood near me by the sofa, her eyes flashing strangely.

" 'My husband was Colonel Rivers. Does that interest you?'

" 'Your husband?—he is dead then?'

" 'Long ago. Ever so long ago. You would not remember.'

" 'You are much younger than I,' I attempted to jest; 'it can't be so long ago as all that!'

" 'I ought to know. It was I who shot him.'

" 'Stella! For God's sake don't talk such nonsense—it's horrible,' I exclaimed excitedly and drew near to her.

"And then a frightening thing happened: she closed her eyes and spoke so softly that I could barely hear her and with an intensity of feeling that overwhelmed her, 'I would kill any man—beasts that you are!'

"And forcing myself to an idiotic attempt at foolery to break the tension I asked, 'Even me?'

I hardly caught her reply; indeed I sensed her meaning rather than heard her words. 'That is why I am here.'

"A horrible fear held me that I was in the presence of stark insanity. I glanced swiftly at her. Never had she appeared so maddeningly seductive. It was impossible, unthinkable that she was out of her senses.

" 'What an extraordinary mood you are in,' I attempted to laugh off my alarm. But the effort was useless. Either I was playing a part in a peculiar farce or else——. I knew not what to think, I only knew that my words suddenly tumbled forth madly, uncontrolled in a passionate spate. 'For God's sake don't think I'm joking, Stella! Can't you see that you are hurting me horribly, horribly! I love you, Stella—You must know it—I can't keep it from you any longer. I love you—love you——!'

" 'Love?' she echoed scornfully, 'love, man? That was something I believed in once, ages ago, until I learnt its end, hated and starved and frozen in this very room! Locked in to die in torture, years before you were born!'

" 'You are mad to speak like that, Stella—you don't realise what you are saying.' Her eyes mocked me as I advanced a step.

" 'Surely you can feel I am sincere?' I pleaded.

" 'That is what **he** said once——'

"It was then that my self-control broke down. I threw my

arms about her and smothered her deriding lips with my own. She did not resist, but drew me to her in a fierce embrace.

"Her touch was icily cold—her whole body seemed frozen. It was sickening and I strove to free myself, but her white hands pressed into the nape of my neck pulling my head downwards and she clung to me so savagely that it was impossible to free myself although I shook myself madly to and fro. And as she clung the frightful coldness of her limbs and lips seared me like flame. My whole body was gradually freezing.

"My tongue had become a rigid mass impossible to move, and although the pain was beyond human endurance even the solace of screaming was denied to me. All I could do was to gaze into the gelid depths of her intense blue eyes. With my last energy I struggled to shriek, to reach the fire, but I fell to the ground in the attempt, nor did Stella cease to cling to me. I realised that it was impossible, that there was no escape, that I should be slowly frozen to death.

"My consciousness was ebbing. Her arms gripped me ever more tightly like bars of frozen steel, and the blue discs of her eyes grew larger, flashing giddily. Very far away her voice sounded, hollow and toneless as though from the depths of space: 'You are not the first. You will not be the last. I shall wait here in the house till others come——.'

"I made a last violent effort to keep my senses from going, but I knew that I was dying, and at last all pain vanished. Faintly in the distance I heard the tones of St. Peter's chime, down in the valley. The embers shifted in the grate. And her eyes—her eyes—blue disks of lapis lazuli——."

(Here the medium stirred uneasily in her trance, moaning somewhat. The deep voice once again broke from her lips, but this time the matter consisted of a jumble of confused words apparently without sense).

J. HANSON-LOWE.

Enigma Variations

A dapper little fellow,
With a brown hat, and patent-leather shoes—
His features almost epicene,
His build so slight—and yet,
His hands are gnarled and dirty—
Mystery !

The tram lurches on its crazy way, stops, and he dismounts
Into obscurity, whence he came,
Taking with him his enigma.

Well set shoulders,
Provocative nape with a skin of living alabaster,
Setting off dark hair, cut short ;
And a small blue hat with a feather—attractive idiocy.
And yet she leans upon a crutch—
Mystery !

The lift surges to a standstill,
And empties into the world again—
Into which she disappears,
Taking with her her enigma.

M.J.

The United States and Music

Music, as we understand it, has not existed for a very long time—not as long as art or literature—so throughout the ages, although there have been many claims to the distinction of literary or artistic centre of the world, there have never been pretensions to the title of world musical focus. But this has changed, and to-day many claims are put forward—ask anyone which city or nation has the right to such a title, and the answer will be almost always patriotic rather than discerning. An Englishman names London; an Italian, Italy; while every musical visitor to Australia says that this country will become the centre, giving various reasons, all of which are plausible and politic.

But say to an Englishman that the United States, or rather New York, could be the centre, and the cry is immediately raised that anything is better than that. It is difficult for people to rid themselves of the idea that the United States is a country where gangsters and "babbits" constitute the population. Naturally enough there is a percentage of this type, but the proportion is not large. Why it should be taken as the whole is difficult to understand, especially when any person who considers must realise how favourable the environment of the United States has been to the free growth of culture.

Environment counts for a great deal. Environment can make or unmake a criminal and in the same way can make the standard of musical appreciation so low as to be mediocre, or so high as to be sublime. Few countries are lucky enough to have good environment and of these the United States has the best; with the resultant highest standard.

The United States has really been musically-minded since the middle of the nineteenth century. At this time there was much turmoil in Europe and many musicians slipped away from their native land to the quiet of the United States, where nested the peace essential for the flourishing of their art. And at the same time there was a certain proportion of innovators who

felt that in America they would find a haven where originality would not be jeered at by traditionalists in music.

From these beginnings music prospered in the United States. The Union has had foreign-born composers, ranging from Dvorak to Bloch and Grainger, settling within its shores; and native-born composers commencing with Chadwick and coming down to the moderns, Copland and Harris; while it has given birth to a new music—ragtime and jazz—which has spread throughout the world.

But the main reason for the United States' commanding position is money. It is the richest country in the world and consequently has been able to offer better prospects for musicians than elsewhere. Lavish donations are made to orchestras, for the setting up of scholarships, music libraries and other facilities which are quite unknown elsewhere. Music is regarded as part of general education in Universities and High Schools, and in many of them orchestras have been formed. And by means of publicity, including "music weeks" and radio-piano lessons for adults, music is kept before the minds of the people. While, best of all, almost every large city has a permanent orchestra—a very uncommon advantage elsewhere.

Thus, due to its wealth, the United States has "imported" music in large quantities—far larger quantities than any other land, and the public has assimilated it and become accustomed to higher standards than elsewhere. So high is this standard that artists press to the United States not only for gain, but for the prestige which a successful American performance gives. Despite this huge influx the Americans still listen to their own artists. Tibbet, Marion Anderson, Robeson are honoured as much in their own country as in the outside world.

With such an environment it is no wonder that the musical American has a high standard of musical appreciation. He is accustomed to the best orchestras, the best conductors, and the best soloists, and anything inferior will not satisfy him. While the rest of the world has to be content with good music part of the time, he has it always, and we can only wait and hope that sometime we may be likewise.

The United States' position, pre-eminent as it was before

the war, is even more favourable now. There is very little livelihood for culture in Europe to-day. The Americas are the only place left for culture to fly to, and during and after this war the United States will become beyond a shadow of doubt not only the musical but the cultural centre of the world.

L.

After Verlaine

The long sobbing,
Of the violins
Of Autumn
Sets my heart throbbing
With a languid
Monotone.

The wind whirling
In dead clouds
Of grey,
Sets them curling
Like an ocean
At bay.

My heart beating
Is a chaos
Of grief;
I'm fleeting
From memory
Like a dead leaf.

JAMES D. O'SULLIVAN.

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